

Activity: 7-1-7 and outbreaks in the news

Scenario set: Covid

Instructions

- On your own, **read** through the following news article(s).
- In your group, **discuss** applying the 7-1-7 approach to the situation described in the article.
 - How could using 7-1-7 in real-time have been helpful in the early phase of this outbreak response?
 - At which government level(s) might 7-1-7 be useful to apply for this outbreak (e.g. national level, subnational, multiple subnational areas) and why?
 - How could 7-1-7 findings from this outbreak be used to inform actions + planning?
- Use your imagination and/or experience to answer if the article does not have enough information.
- In plenary, briefly **summarize** the article and your discussion.

News Article

Maine wedding reception now linked to deaths of 7 people who didn't attend

CBS News | By Associated Press | 16 September 2020

At least seven people have died in connection to a coronavirus outbreak that continues to sicken people in Maine following a wedding reception held over the summer that violated state virus guidelines, public health authorities said. None of the seven people who have died attended the wedding, CBS affiliate WABI reported.

The August wedding reception at the Big Moose Inn in Millinocket is linked to more than 175 confirmed cases of the virus, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention said Tuesday.

Maine authorities have identified overlaps between the wedding reception and outbreaks elsewhere in the state. An employee of the York County Jail attended the wedding, Maine CDC officials have said. Maine health officials have also said an outbreak at a Madison rehabilitation center, which is the site of six of the seven deaths, is connected to the wedding because an employee of the facility lives in the same household as a person who attended.

The virus cases stemming from the wedding have spanned hundreds of miles in a state that had largely controlled the spread of the coronavirus through the summer. Maine has reported less than 5,000 cases of the virus in total since March.

But the growing number of cases related to the wedding, which exceeded the state's guidelines of 50 people or less at indoor gatherings, could undo some of that progress if it continues to swell. Authorities have said more than 65 people attended the wedding.

The six people from the Madison rehabilitation facility who died were all residents of that facility and none of them attended the wedding reception, said Dr. Nirav Shah, director of Maine CDC.

"Maine CDC is concerned about where we are, and I'm asking everyone else to share in that concern. COVID-19, right now, is not on the other side of the fence. It is in our yards," Shah said. "The gains that Maine has made against COVID-19 are ones that could, and unfortunately can, be washed away."

The wedding was also officiated by pastor Todd Bell of Calvary Baptist Church in Sanford. The Maine CDC is currently investigating to determine if an outbreak at the church is connected to the wedding outbreak. That outbreak has sickened 10 people, Shah said.

Calvary Baptist Church issued a statement on Tuesday that said "a number of Calvary Baptist Church members attended" the wedding reception. The statement said the church is taking precautions to limit the spread of the virus, and it will defend its right to continue holding services...

...Maine CDC spokesperson Robert Long said the agency's investigations suggest "multiple potential points of transmission related to the August 7 wedding and reception." The agency is working to limit the spread of the virus and support people affected by it, he said.

Shah said the state's percent positivity rate has ticked up to 0.63% for the previous seven days. At one point, the rate was less than half a percentage point. The rate remains well below the national average of about 5%, Shah said.

"The trends that we've seen over the last two weeks tell us that things are either getting worse or not getting better," Shah said, WABI reported. "We are asking everybody that they can do their part. Even though there were positive signs on the horizon, low hospitalization rates, generally favorable levels of testing, there are still concerning signs. What we don't want to have happen is that those concerning signs take over the positive."

The original article can be accessed at: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-maine-wedding-reception-linked-7-deaths/>